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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General says deployment of peace-keeping force to Bosnia-Hercegovina is "not feasible"; reiterates his appeal for immediate cease-fire in that region; expresses concern over situation of 1 million displaced persons and refugees "in the former Yugoslav lands".

+ Security Council holds consultations on Secretary-General's proposal to establish United Nations Operation in Somalia at estimated cost of $23.1 million for initial six months; 90-day humanitarian plan calling for "zone of peace" to allow shipment of emergency assistance by United Nations humanitarian agencies.

+ Secretary-General begins three-day official visit to Islamabad for talks on Pakistani Government assistance in efforts to achieve political solution to Afghanistan conflict; Personal Representative, Benon Sevan, briefs Secretary-General on his recent activities in Afghanistan; Secretary-General to travel to Iran before returning to New York.

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In a report to the Security Council today on the situation in Yugoslavia, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali says that the deployment of a peace-keeping force is "not feasible" in Bosnia-Hercegovina, in light of the current situation. He also repeated his appeal to all parties to stop fighting and to implement their cease-fire agreement of 12 April.

The Secretary-General's report is based on recommendations of his Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, who has just returned from his seventh mission to Yugoslavia. Mr. Vance had pointed to the "widespread violence" and limitations on human, material and financial resources as reasons not to deploy United Nations peace-keepers to the area. He reported that the situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina had "worsened markedly" since his last visit to the area at the beginning of March. No party to the conflict was blameless for the current situation and its escalation and all sides had to bear some of the responsability for the outbreak of the conflict and its continuation, noted Mr. Vance. The Secretary-General said he fully concurred with this assessment.

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In his report, Mr. Boutros-Ghali also expresses "great concern" over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina, noting that the armed conflict in that region had created some 185,000 new displaced persons, in addition to the 900,000 displaced persons and refugees from the fighting in Croatia. In sum, the conflicts in the former Yugoslav lands had resulted in well over 1 million displaced persons and refugees, says the Secretary-General. While the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had responded to the new crisis by immediately delivering food aid, he said, the provision of basic human needs was significantly hindered by the continued fighting.
(S/23836)

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The Security Council held consultations this afternoon concerning the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a United Nations peace-keeping mission in Somalia -- to be known as United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) -- for an initial period of six months.

The Secretary-General had proposed, in his report to the Council dated 21 April, that such an operation be established to monitor the 3 March cease-fire agreed upon by Interim President Mohamed and General Aidid. According to an addendum to his report, the estimated cost of the Operation, which would consist of 500 military and security personnel and 79 civilian personnel, would be approximately $23.1 million.

In his initial report to the Council, the Secretary-General noted that the situation continued to be of great concern to the "international community" and had "destabilizing effects" on the Horn of Africa. Last month, he dispatched a technical team to the Somali capital to discuss humanitarian assistance to the population in Mogadishu, in accordance with the Security Council resolution 746 (1992) of 17 March.

In yet another addendum to the Secretary-General's report, dated 21 April, the team outlined its humanitarian programme in a 90-day plan of action, saying some 1.5 million people in various part of the country were seriously threatened by lack of food and health care. A further 3.5 million Somalis were also in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, the team said.

According to the report, the deteriorating security situation throughout many parts of the country continued to be a major impediment to the delivery of relief assistance. Describing the situation as "problematic and dangerous", the team recommended the establishment of a "zone of peace" for the port of Mogadishu to allow food shipments to reach the capital, as well as deployment of adequate security personnel to protect United Nations relief personnel and enable safe passage for supplies. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would be responsible for shipments of food supplies to the port, if the security situation in and around Mogadishu improves.

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The 90-day plan of action, the report said, could only succeed through a carefully coordinated and collaborative effort on the part of the local leadership, clan elders, the international community, the ICRC, NGOs and the United Nations system. The Secretary-General has appointed David Bassiouni as Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to ensure that maximum use is made of the resources. He will be based in Mogadishu.

In addition, the Secretary-General is expected to appoint shortly a Special Representative for Somalia to assist him in convening a conference on national reconciliation and unity in Somalia.
(S/23829, add.1, add.2)

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrived this afternoon in Islamabad from New Delhi to begin a three-day official visit to Pakistan. Upon his arrival, the Secretary-General told the press that during his visit he would hold discussions and negotiations with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Pakistan concerning the role of that country at the United Nations and the assistance that Pakistan can give to the Organization in its efforts to achieve a national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

Earlier in the day, Benon Sevan, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan arrived in New Delhi in order to brief the Secretary-General on the latest developments in Afghanistan. Speaking to correspondents at New Delhi airport, before leaving India, the Secretary-General thanked the Government and people of that country for their assistance and support to him in pursuing the aims of the United Nations.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General is scheduled to hold meetings in the morning with Foreign Minister Muhammad Siddique Khan Kanju and, at lunch time, with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan. In the evening, he will hold a meeting with the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

Following his official visit to Pakistan, the Secretary-General is scheduled to travel to Iran in an effort to avoid violence and promote reconciliation in Afghanistan.

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